

Applicant: Dietmar ZIELKE
Appl. No. 09/783,298

Amendments

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 2, 4, 6, 7, 18, 21, 24 and 25; cancel claims 1, 5, 16, 19, 20 and add new claims 26-28.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein said processing step includes extruding gathered dust.

4. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein said agglomerating step includes compacting gathered dust.

6. (Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein the processing step includes processing gathered dust into particles constituting granules of agglomerated dust.

7. (Amended) The method of claim 26, further comprising the steps of making a rod-like tobacco filler, and embedding the particles in the filler.

18. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein said agglomerating means includes means for converting dust into particles with the application of pressure.

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21. (Amended) The machine of claim 28, wherein said converting means comprises means for advancing a stream of dedusted supply in a predetermined direction along a predetermined path, said means for admitting including means for supplying the particles into a predetermined portion of said path.

24. (Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein the processing step does not include extruding the gathered dust into said particles.

25. (Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein the processing step gathers the dust into particles of dust with sizes of between about 1 mm to about 3 mm.

26. (New) A method of processing tobacco dust which develops in the course of the making of tobacco-containing products, comprising the steps of:

gathering the dust;
processing gathered dust into particles having sizes greater than the average size of dust;
monitoring the sizes of the particles; and
comminuting the particles having sizes greater than a predetermined size.

27. (New) Apparatus for processing tobacco dust which develops in the course of the making of tobacco-containing products, comprising;

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means for gathering the dust;

means for processing gathered dust into particles having sizes greater than the average size of the dust; and

means for comminuting at least the particles having sizes exceeding a predetermined size.

28. (New) A machine for making smokers' products, comprising:

means for establishing a supply of comminuted smokable material including tobacco dust;

means for segregating the dust from the supply and for gathering the segregated dust into tobacco-containing particles, said gathering and segregating means including means for comminuting at least the tobacco-containing particles having sizes exceeding a predetermined size;

means for converting the dedusted supply into smokers' products; and

means for admitting the particles to the dedusted supply.